



Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, September 26, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK led with a report that the GOJ has established a new system to inform the public about abnormal seismic activity in the Nankai Trough. Commercial broadcasters gave top play to reports that all political parties have begun preparations for the upcoming general election announced by Prime Minister Abe on Monday.

POLITICS

Koike's surprise move turns election into showdown between her and Abe

Commercial broadcasters' infotainment shows on Tuesday gave more coverage to Tokyo Governor Koike's unexpected announcement on her decision to take the helm of the new Party of Hope than to Prime Minister Abe's press conference on the dissolution of the Lower House. The intense media coverage proved once again that Koike, who used to be a TV anchor, is extremely skillful at controlling the media spin prior to a key election, just as she did last summer when she clinched a landslide victory in the gubernatorial race. Political pundits on the programs agreed that Koike's political gambit to reset the election agenda turned out to be successful, as most media outlets now portray the looming general election as a showdown between Abe and Koike. In a bid to elicit support from not only centrist voters dissatisfied with the Abe administration but also independent and liberal constituencies, Koike highlighted her party's goal of phasing out nuclear energy. As a result, the panelists noted that the presence of the Democratic Party is rapidly fading even ahead of the official start of the campaign, predicting that more DP parliamentarians may choose to leave the beleaguered party to join hands with Koike, who will probably crisscross the country to deliver campaign speeches in support of her party's candidates.

The commentators were divided over whether the LDP or the DP will suffer more damage from Koike's involvement in the election, with some saying that the largest opposition party may suffer a crushing defeat because voters critical of the Abe administration may consider the Party of Hope more promising than the DP. They said the LDP may be able to wage a solid campaign against Koike's party since Komeito is inclined to back LDP candidates strongly on account of its disapproval of Koike's renewed interest in national politics apparently at the expense of Tokyo politics. Others predicted that many LDP candidates in the Tokyo Metropolitan area will probably be defeated in view of the governor's high popularity. Meanwhile, several panelists projected that Koike's party may lose momentum eventually because criticism of the governor for "making light of Tokyo politics" is bound to be raised at some point.

- [Gist of PM Abe's news conference announcing Lower House dissolution, Sept. 25](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Gist of Koike's news conference announcing new "Party of Hope," Sept. 25](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Koike maps out differences between herself and Abe](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Politicians react to Koike's new party](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Analysis: UN sanctions against DPRK was decisive factor in Lower House dissolution](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Tokyo governor comes out swinging as Abe caught flat-footed](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Tokyo governor saw Abe's election gamble coming](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Koike says she would vote for Komeito chief Yamaguchi as prime minister](#) (Sankei Online)
- [Major bills to be carried over to next Diet session due to Lower House dissolution](#) (Mainichi)
- [List of Diet members joining Koike's new party](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Komeito leader in Tokyo assembly mulling parting ways with Koike's Tomin First party](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Japanese business community split on Abe's policy agenda](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Nikai's efforts to expand his faction trigger endorsement race within LDP](#) (Asahi)

- [Political parties spent 29.4 billion yen in government subsidies in 2016, up 13%](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Cartoon: LH dissolution](#) (Akahata)
- [Cartoon: Abe and Kim](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Sept. 25, 2017](#) (Nikkei)

OPINION POLLS

- [64% disagree with Abe's plan to dissolve Lower House, Kyodo poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Kyodo News 1st trend survey & results from Tokyo Shimbun](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Opinion poll & results from Nikkei Digital](#) (Nikkei Online)

AMBASSADOR

Ambassador Hagerty visits businesses in Kansai

Nikkei reported online that Ambassador Hagerty visited the Technology and Innovation Center of Daikin Industries, an Osaka-based manufacturer of air conditioners, on Monday, quoting him as saying that he observed a company whose innovations have made a significant mark on economic development in the U.S. and Japan and that the company has played an important role in the U.S. economy. The Ambassador also visited the headquarters of Panasonic Corporation and held talks with senior members of the Kansai Economic Federation.

- [U.S. envoy says Japan, U.S. will discuss FTA during POTUS's visit to Japan](#) (Nikkei)
- [U.S. envoy Hagerty holds talks with Osaka governor](#) (Kyodo News)

INTERNATIONAL

Japan expresses concern over South Korea's comfort woman monument plan

NHK reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told a news conference that Japan has expressed its concern to South Korea over a plan to erect a monument for the comfort women on the grounds of a national cemetery. Suga was quoted as saying that the plan runs counter to the 2015 comfort women agreement, under which Japan and South Korea confirmed that they had finally and irreversibly settled the dispute over the comfort women. Suga added that the GOJ is concerned that the plan could throw cold water on the efforts by Tokyo and Seoul to develop a forward-looking relationship and that Japan will stress to the ROK that it is critically important to implement the

bilateral agreement, which was a pledge to the international community. The network said that MOFA has lodged a protest with the ROK government through the Japanese Embassy in Seoul.

White House press secretary responds to DPRK minister's remarks

TBS reported at noon that the White House responded to the North Korean foreign minister's remark on Monday that Pyongyang regards President Trump's comment on Twitter saying that the North Korean leader and foreign minister "won't be around much longer!" as a "clear declaration of war" and that Pyongyang is entitled to take every possible step for self-defense even if U.S. strategic bombers do not enter North Korea's territorial airspace. The network quoted White House spokesperson Sanders as telling reporters on Monday: "We have not declared war on North Korea. And frankly, the suggestion of that is absurd." The spokesperson also reportedly warned that "it's never appropriate for a country to shoot down another country's aircraft when it's over international waters."

- [Japan expresses concern over S. Korea's "comfort women" monument plan](#) (Kyodo News)
- [U.S. expert on "red line" in confrontation with North Korea](#) (AERA)
- [Japan's Kono plans to celebrate China's foundation day at embassy](#) (Kyodo News)

SECURITY

- [Court voids surveillance measures against group led by ex-AUM member](#) (Kyodo News)

ECONOMY

- [Changes in economic indicators before and after Abe came to power](#) (Mainichi)
- [Spent nuclear fuel removal at Fukushima plant to be delayed again](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Interview with Yasunori Yoshimura, special advisor to the cabinet on raising the fertility rate](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Konica Minolta to purchase US drug tech startup](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

SCIENCE

- [Japan catches 177 whales in northwest Pacific for "research whaling"](#) (Kyodo News)
- [JAXA to send probe to the moons of Mars in 2024](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

SOCIETY

Sex and disabilities

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported on a Japanese film called "Perfect Revolution" that depicts a disabled man who falls in love and addresses the issue of discrimination toward people with disabilities. The program said the main character was modeled after Yoshihiko Kumashino, who started a website to provide information about "no-tell hotels" that provide privacy for people with disabilities. Kumashino said the idea of disabled people having sex is not even raised as an issue in Japan because people assume that people with disabilities don't have sexual desire.

